

BACKGROUND PAPER  
ON  
OUTSTANDING BLOG – AIR FORCE

1. The Air Force Live blog, <http://airforcelive.dodlive.mil/>, is the main, official blog of the U.S. Air Force, and brings personal stories at least twice per week to thousands of followers. The blog complements the other official social media by providing more space for sharing the personal stories behind the news stories.

The key audiences are diverse, but those who engage the most with the content are military supporters and veterans because they can relate to the content. The goal of the blog is to tell the stories of Airmen, the Air Force and highlight the mission of the Air Force, while communicating Air Force priorities. At the same time, the Social Media Team wants followers to feel emotionally connected to the content, and for this reason, the strategy for the blog had changed in the latter part of the year to deliberately try to create more original content instead of waiting for the right content to come along.

The long-term objectives are to increase the reach of the Air Force mission, feature the work of Airmen, and personally connect with key audiences. The blog, like the social media program, has a general objective of putting human faces on the Air Force mission, so the blog aims to tell the stories of the Airmen behind the missions. The short-term objectives are to have followers share and comment on blog posts. Two ways the team has tried accomplishing this is by asking questions in blog posts and being more careful about the content published to ensure it'll resonate with readers.

2. The links to the blog posts below represent the types of posts readers enjoyed reading the most.

- a. “No regrets” (18 Apr 13)

<http://airforcelive.dodlive.mil/2013/04/no-regrets/>

- b. “You know you’re in the AF when...” (7 Nov 13)

<http://airforcelive.dodlive.mil/2013/11/you-know-youre-in-the-af-when/>

- c. “Home is where the Air Force sends you” (22 Oct 13)

<http://airforcelive.dodlive.mil/2013/10/home-is-where-the-air-force-sends-you/>

3. The blog is an important aspect of the social media program because it shows followers an accessible and personable Air Force. Airmen are heroes, but they are also regular people who just happen to have amazing stories to tell. The hope is that if audiences connect with Airmen and the mission, they will be more likely to support and appreciate the Air Force, especially during times of crisis. Also, if followers believe there is open and honest interaction taking place, they may also listen to the Air Force first when a crisis occurs or inaccurate information surfaces from external media.

4. This year the team started looking internally for blog content, which has helped increase unique visits by 42%. While some existing Air Force content is used to help the team fill in the editorial calendar while original blog content is in development, the goal is to be edgier, valuable and personal. It’s all about telling the story in a new way by letting readers know the Air Force is truly in touch with its followers and the Air Force culture and lifestyle.

Followers receive value-added information but also receive content that is conversational and real. Each Airman on the Social Media Team has experiences to tell and connections with people who have stories to tell, so these avenues are pursued more. For example, one social media Airman shared her personal stories of the assignments she’s had and her educational path. Both of these blog posts did well not only on the blog but also on the other Air Force social media platforms. One of these posts was the third best performing on Air Force Live with more than 1,700 clicks and 18 comments. She discussed experiences other Airmen had gone through as well.

Taking cues from social media accounts the team members follow on a personal level has also become the norm because if a team member follows the social media site, there must be

something good about it. For instance, one team member liked the concept of a Facebook post from a civilian newspaper and decided to customize it for the Air Force blog. The post was unconventional for anything in the Air Force, and it even poked fun at the service. The blog post was “You know you’re in the AF when...”, and it became the best performing Air Force Live blog post with 68 comments, more than 10,000 clicks, and the sixth most clicked Air Force social media content ever. Followers identified with the post because it was written in a humorous way and highlighted the Air Force lifestyle. It was a calculated risk the team took, and it surely will not be the last. The Social Media Team has a personality, and it is the voice of real Airmen.